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SNAPSHOT

OF CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEMS OF

ARGENTINA



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Program information

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Housed at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems is a global knowledge and resource hub that actively supports national efforts to develop, strengthen, and scale-up CRVS systems. It collaborates with organizations and experts to broker access to information and expertise, including global standards, tools, research evidence, and relevant good practice.

The Centre of Excellence was established with funding from Global Affairs Canada and IDRC and contributes directly to the work of the Global Financing Facility, a key financing platform of the UN Secretary General's Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health.

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Published by the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems with input from the Organization of American States (OAS). This publication was authored by Zoran Đoković, a consultant with the Centre of Excellence.

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The research presented in this publication was carried out with financial and technical assistance from the Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems. Housed at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), it is jointly funded by Global Affairs Canada and IDRC. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of Global Affairs Canada, IDRC, or its Board of Governors.

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a brief introduction to the civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) system in Argentina.

The information is based on a case study of Argentina, published in *The Nexus between Civil Registration and Social Protection Systems: Five Country Practices*. It is further supplemented with other findings from a desk review of available resources, including documents published by the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank. Among other things, this report presents:

- Background information on the country;
- Selected indicators relevant to CRVS improvement;
- Stakeholders' activities; and
- Resources available and needed to strengthen CRVS systems.

Brief country profile

Argentina is located mostly in the southern half of South America. Sharing the bulk of the Southern Cone with Chile to the west, the country is also bordered by Bolivia and Paraguay to the north, Brazil to the northeast, Uruguay and the South Atlantic Ocean to the east, and the Drake Passage to the south.

Argentina is subdivided into 23 provinces and one autonomous city, Buenos Aires, which is the federal capital of the nation as decided by Congress. The provinces and the capital have their own constitutions but exist under a federal system.

- Land area: 2,780,400 km²
- Population: 44,494,502¹ with an estimated annual growth rate of 1 percent.² In 2018, 92 percent of the population resided in urban areas, with the remaining 8 percent residing in rural areas.³

Argentina



Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

- Capital city: Buenos Aires
- Official working language: Spanish
- Ministry responsible for civil registration: Ministry of Interior, Public Works and Housing
- Civil registration agency: National Register of Persons (RENAPER)
- National statistical office: National Institute of Statistics and Census of Argentina



CRVS dimensions

Births	
Completeness of birth registration	100% (2012) ⁴
Children under 5 years of age whose births were reported as registered	100% (2012) ⁵
Births attended by skilled health personnel	100% (2015) ⁶
Women aged 15–49 who received antenatal care from a skilled provider	89.3% (2015) ⁷
DPT1 immunization coverage among 1-year-olds	91% (2018) ⁸
Crude birth rate (per 1,000 population)	17 (2017) ⁹
Total fertility rate (live births per woman)	2.3 (2017) ¹⁰
Adolescent fertility rate (per 1,000 girls aged 15–19 years)	63 (2017) ¹¹
Population under age 15	24% (2012) ¹²
Deaths	
Completeness of death registration	100% (2011) ¹³
Crude death rate (per 1,000 population)	8 (2017) ¹⁴
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	8.8 (2018) ¹⁵
Under 5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	9.9 (2018) ¹⁶
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	39 (2017) ¹⁷
Marriages and divorces	
Marriage registration rate	2.7 (2017) ¹⁸
Women aged 20–24 first married or in union before age 15	Not available
Women aged 20–24 first married or in union before age 18	Not available
Divorce registration rate	Not available
Vital statistics including causes of death data	
Compilation and dissemination of civil registration-based statistics	Available
Medically certified causes of death	Available

Civil registration system

Legislative framework

Civil registration in Argentina is regulated by *Law No. 26413 (2008) on the Registration of Civil Status and the Capacity of Persons*. This law replaced *Law No. 17671 (1968) on the Identification, Registration, and Classification of National Human Potential* and introduced a modernized approach to operating provincial civil registries and regulating their responsibilities in relation to the National Register of Persons (RENAPER). The law also introduced the Argentine Federal Council for Civil Registries, which is tasked with ensuring uniform regulation across different actors in the registration process and supporting information sharing between provinces. Changes, new decrees, and regulations have emerged over time that ease access to birth registration and documentation in keeping with global trends outlined in international conventions and treaties. Many of these are the result of needs expressed by different social groups.

Data Protection Act No. 25.326 (2000) introduced guarantees of full protection of personal information recorded in databases maintained by public authorities and private enterprises. The Act also established the Data Protection Office under the Ministry of Justice to oversee compliance with the law.

Management, organization, and operations

Civil registration and identification services are administered by two entities.

Civil state registries are in charge of recording all vital events, including births, deaths, and marriages. They function under provincial governments.

RENAPER is responsible for registering and certifying the identity of citizens living in Argentina, including issuing national identity

cards (ID). RENAPER has delegated some of its responsibilities to provincial authorities, which register vital events and process requests for national identity cards and passports. A person receives their first national identity card right after birth. Administratively, RENAPER is an autonomous and decentralized body under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior of the Nation.

National CRVS systems coordination mechanisms

The Federal Council of Directors of Civil Registries gathers the directors of each provincial civil registry, the civil registry of the City of Buenos Aires, and a representative of RENAPER. The Federal Council's goal is to

- coordinate tasks of the civil registries across the country to ensure information exchange and uniformity in applying registration procedures;
- maintain uniform criteria for the interpretation of registration legislation; and
- keep national and international bodies with a stake in the registration process informed.

Administrative-level registration centres

Law 26.413 sets out general parameters on the actions and obligations of registries, but the civil state registries are managed by each provincial government. Each provincial office defines its institutional organization, availability, resources, investment in physical and computer infrastructure, procedures for public service, and items for each service. This means there are significant operational differences between provincial offices. Some have an advanced technological infrastructure with digital registration systems, such as the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and the provinces of Santa Fe, Neuquén, Misiones, and San Juan. Others are in the process of modernizing their services, such as the provinces of Mendoza, Catamarca, La Pampa, and Buenos Aires.



Accessibility of civil registration services

No precise data available

Registration of vital events

In general, the services offered by the 24 provincial civil registry offices are

- birth registration;
- marriage registration;
- death registration;
- restricted capacity registration;
- administrative rectifications; and
- citizen rectifications (e.g. changing gender or last name).

Law 17671 established a legal period of 40 days for timely **birth registration**. Birth registration completed from the 41st day after birth until the age of 6 is considered late. Beyond the age of 6, birth registration has to be done by judicial means. Registration can be initiated by one parent (if married), both parents (if not married), direct relatives of the parents, or the Public Prosecutor's Office of Minors. Registration is completed upon verifying the identity cards of informants and examining the medical certificate.

Birth can be also registered *ex officio* after 40 days of birth if the parents did not approach authorities for the registration. The hospital must send the birth certificate or certificate of live birth to the corresponding civil registry. The registry officer uses these documents and the medical certificate to record information about the birth.

Death registration is done by presenting a copy of the medical death certificate and the identity card of the deceased. Informants must present documentary evidence of their relationship to the deceased.

Marriage registration can be done in registration offices at either the bride's or groom's place of residence. Both must undergo medical

examinations in authorized medical establishments. They must also declare if they were married before and report the names of any former spouses, where they were married, and the reason why the marriage ended. They must provide either the death certificate or the legalized copy of the sentence that annulled or dissolved the previous marriage.

Backlog of unregistered births

People who don't have their birth registered also don't have a national identity card. Historically, the backlog of unregistered births was addressed by issuing national identity cards. One of the reasons for non-registration was often the fact that some provinces charged fees to issue a national identity card.

In 2003 and 2006, Decree 262/2003 and Decree 415/2006 levied the fee for the first identity card for children and adolescents. Two amnesty laws were also enacted, allowing late birth registration for children up to age 10 without a judicial process. In 2008, a new regulation entered into force, which enabled late registration of *de facto* or *ex officio* births that took place in health facilities within a maximum of 20 days. *Ex officio* registration is done based on the medical certificate of birth alone.

In 2009, the federal government issued Decree PEN 90/2009. This set up an administrative regime, on an exceptional basis and for one year (which could be extended for a second year), for registering the births of children aged 1 to 12. Under this decree, all birth registrations that take place during the term of the decree are exempt from fines, meaning that free access to an identity card is guaranteed. In 2015, it was estimated that this decree had made it possible for more than 500,000 children to access the right to their identity. In 2019, a new decree extended the possibility of registering and certifying a birth and obtaining an ID card at no cost to individuals up to 18 years of age.

Sample registration forms

Medical certificate of birth – buenosaires.gob.ar/sites/gcaba/files/styles/interna_noticia/public/field/image/nacimiento_foto_0.jpg?itok=6d27_BUG

Medical certificate of death – buenosaires.gob.ar/sites/gcaba/files/styles/interna_noticia/public/field/image/defuncion_0.jpg?itok=vyHx94Ja

Registration fee

The first birth certificate is issued free of charge. If parents request urgent issuance in a province that does not issue same-day certificates, this service may cost up to US\$2.80 (80 pesos). A copy of a birth certificate ranges from US\$2.16 (60 pesos) to US\$7.10 (200 pesos) depending on the province.

Vital statistics system

Vital statistics

The information required by the Ministry of Health of the Nation comes from the live birth statistical report that is prepared together with the birth certificate in health facilities. The Ministry of Health is responsible for collecting and analyzing the information issued by hospitals, and then publishing vital statistics to support policies or programs promoted by state agencies.

Causes of death

In 2017, the mortality rate of cancer in Argentina was 118 deaths for every 100,000 men and 87 deaths for every 100,000 women (rates standardized by world standard population). Cancers accounted for 62,000 deaths that year, representing 19 percent of the total. This includes deaths registered with the ICD-10 (International Classification of Diseases, 10th revision) codes C00-99 (neoplasms) and D00-48 (tumours of uncertain or benign behaviour). Cardiovascular

diseases and respiratory diseases accounted for 29 percent and 19 percent of total deaths, respectively.

Cancers, cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases, and diabetes are the main types of non-communicable diseases, which caused 50 percent of all deaths registered in Argentina in 2017. All deaths are captured irrespective of the location where the death occurred (Table 1).

Table 1 Information collected on causes of death.

Causes of death information	Information collected	
	Yes	No
For deaths occurring in health facilities	X	
For natural deaths occurring in the communities	X	
For non-natural deaths occurring in the communities	X	

Digitization

Civil registration in Argentina was traditionally paper based. Since 2009, several civil registrars have incorporated tools and systems that enable the use of digital technologies to register and update vital events information. RENAPER provided its support and promoted the benefits of digital technologies. However, some provinces still have not digitized registration processes.

A series of innovative initiatives were implemented to create a digital one-stop shop called Mi Argentina, which includes:

- Online birth and death registration;
- Verification of proof of life for pension beneficiaries remotely; and
- Verification services to public and private institutions.



In 2015, the newly created Ministry of Modernization started to work together with other agencies, including RENAPER, to accelerate implementation of infrastructure that will expand the scope of available digital services.

Computerization

In 2009, RENAPER began reforming its business processes to provide a secure, reliable, and unique identity to citizens. The changes were implemented in the areas of civil registration and civil identification. In the area of civil registration, RENAPER supported provinces in digitizing registration and data processing, including piloting birth and death registration via mobile phone. A new electronic national identity card was introduced that stores biometrics (fingerprints, face, and digital signature), which is drawn from personal records in a central database created at enrolment.

The integration between the civil registration digitized system and the national identity card digital system is central to the success of these reforms. It also covers the

- creation of administrative linkages;
- creation of a digital national identity card;
- assignment of a unique number for newborns following birth registration; and
- creation of an interoperability platform to exchange civil registry records between provincial civil registries.

Online registration services at health facilities

Introducing Electronic Living Birth Certificates, which are issued by the doctor who attended the birth, is a key strategy in modernizing the registration business processes. Currently, many birth medical certificates are physically sent by the hospital to the corresponding provincial civil registration office. The new service allows the hospital to send the certificate electronically, along

with other information, such as biometric data for the mother and her newborn. This data is entered into the civil registration system, which asks the child's mother or father to formalize the birth registration at a registry office within the time limit.

Mobile technology application

Although birth and death registration using mobile devices has been piloted, mobile technology is not used for civil registration processes.

Unique identification number

The unique identification numbers used in Argentina link personal records across RENAPER. A person's unique identification number is the same as the number on their national identity card, which is issued to each newborn right after birth. This is a random generated number that does not reveal any personal information.

Digitization of historical civil registration records

Digitization of paper-based records of vital events is ongoing. By the end of 2017, only the province of Buenos Aires was able to digitize 77 percent of death records kept in that province. It is not known how many birth certificates have not been digitized at the national level.

Link with identification system

RENAPER operates Quick Documentation Centres across provinces, which function as enrolment centres for issuing national identity cards and passports, and for collecting biometric data. The enrolment is designed to take place right after a birth certificate has been issued. At the point of enrolment, the baby's biographical and biometric information is captured and transmitted to RENAPER's central database. A national identity card or travel document is then personalized at RENAPER's main office and sent to the parents by mail.

Provinces oversee biographical and biometric data collection, while RENAPER provides hardware, software, networks, technical assistance, and support during the enrolment process. A monetary incentive was arranged between RENAPER and civil registries, which gives RENAPER 70 percent of the fee that citizens pay for a national ID card and the remaining 30 percent to provincial civil registries. The federal government assumes the cost of production as the first identity card is free for citizens.

Interface with other sectors and operations

National identity cards enable citizens to access services provided by the government and the private sector, both of which rely on RENAPER to safely authenticate, verify, and update identity information.

Health facilities do not deny care to people without documents, but people must present ID and other documents to access specific programs promoted by the Ministry of Health.

To access any **education service**, the minor or adult will need to present their identification document. However, access to education cannot be denied solely on the basis of lack of identification.

Citizens must usually present a national ID card to access a range of social services, including:

- National Food Security Plan
- National Early Childhood Plan
- National Social Protection Plan
- Progresar
- Home Program
- Social Rate
- PAMI (comprehensive medical care program)
- Include Health
- National Rehabilitation Service

- Social Monotribute
- Youth More Work Better Work
- National Employment Plans
- Training and Employment Insurance
- Make Future
- Community Productive Projects
- PROCREAR (single family housing credit program)
- RENABAP (national register of popular neighbourhoods)
- ARGENTA (health insurance)
- Non-contributory pension
- Honorary pension for Atlantic War Veterans
- Non-contributory old age pension
- Graceful PNC and Special Laws
- Unemployment Insurance
- SiPA Pensions
- PUAM (universal pension for the elderly)
- Universal Allowance for Social Protection for Child and Child with Disabilities
- Universal Assignment for Social Protection: Pregnancy
- Family Allowance for Child and Child with Disabilities
- Prenatal Family Assignment

The Single Tax Identification Code identifies self-employed workers, merchants, and companies for the payment of taxes. To obtain the code requires the original and copy of the ID card, the application form, and documentation that validates the tax domicile.

In 2018 alone, RENAPER responded to more than 230 million queries linked with identity verification from the public and private sectors, creating the foundation for a digital economy.

Improvement initiatives and external support

Improvement plan and budget

Budgetary allocations and requirements

The government treasury allocation for RENAPER for the 2020 fiscal year is projected at US\$88 million.¹⁹

Activities identified as high priorities

Besides the overarching goal of achieving 100 percent documentation of the population, RENAPER's budget for 2020 sets out other specific priorities, such as:

- Expand the number of facilities for birth registration and identification offices across the country in close coordination with provincial civil registries. In parallel, expand digitization and best practices in this area to provide the best protection of mothers and their children.
- Follow up on the Federal Documentation Plan, initiated in 2016, with the aim of bringing registration facilities closer to vulnerable populations and those in remote areas. Actively search to identify people without identification and provide assistance on a case-by-case basis.
- Enhance cooperation with the Provincial Civil Records, responsible for the registration of vital events throughout the country, and reinforce the link to civil identification.

Conclusion

Argentina has made significant efforts in the last decade to improve civil registration and identification processes. Progress was made in improving coordination between RENAPER and provincial civil registration offices coupled with digitization of registration business processes. The result is a great level of information interoperability between RENAPER and provincial registration offices, which is extended to other government systems. In the process, the civil registration records database is linked with the national identity card database, ensuring a holistic approach to legal identity processing.

Over the last 15 years, a model linking legal identity and social protection has been maintained, despite turbulence in the country's political and economic context. This link helped to solve the challenges arising from the documentation problems of populations living in poverty by improving access to social services, as shown by the way social programs extended coverage to more people. The synergy between legal identity and social protection policies also led to greater transparency in allocating benefits to individuals and families.



Resources

Websites

National Institute of Statistics and Census of Argentina – indec.gob.ar

National Register of Persons (RENAPER) – argentina.gob.ar/interior/renaper

Additional materials

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